

EQUITABLE DOWNTOWN MENLO PARK

Exploring demand for affordable housing and public transportation in Menlo Park, California



Conducted by the students of Stanford University's Sustainable Cities class in partnership with Friends of Caltrain, TransForm, and the Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project is the product of a collaboration between students in Stanford University's Sustainable Cities class, the Stanford University Urban Studies department, and M2G partners including Friends of Caltrain, TransForm, and the Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo.

The goals of this collaboration are to understand the demand for increased access to affordable housing and to encourage the upcoming update to the El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan of Menlo Park to provide affordable housing and improved transportation options for commuters. Menlo Park City Council updated its Downtown Specific Plan in 2017 and is looking to further update it in decisions related to transportation, land use, and housing. This is an opportunity for community organizations and researchers to come together to collect and analyze data to provide useful policy recommendations moving forward.

This project aims to understand the demand for improved public transit options and affordable housing and to understand the current barriers to using existing options in Menlo Park. We hope that our survey data can help inform business and community leaders, city planners, and decision-makers in Menlo Park as they revise the Downtown Specific Plan. To achieve these goals, we surveyed employees, managers, and business owners in Menlo Park about their experiences and thoughts regarding these issues. These findings are both available to the general public as well as presented at the Stanford Sustainable Cities Expo on December 5, 2018.

The main research questions that our team has sought to address include:

Are people happy with the current options for housing and for commuting in Menlo Park?

How great is the demand, and how do we show it?

What factors should be considered when deciding policy on Menlo Park land use and transit?

How can we incentivize public transportation?

Do service workers and current residents express similar needs?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Our project is within the context of a greater urban crisis. Through this literature review, we hope to contextualize some of the issues that our project explores and provide a backdrop to compare our findings. We observed perspectives on housing and transportation around the Bay Area, and how they influence on another. Our project, which partners with TransForm, Friends of Caltrain, and the Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County, resonates with these perspectives from previous research and will guide us in evaluating specific solutions for the downtown area of Menlo Park. This literature review will first examine the link between greenhouse gas emissions and housing. Then, it will examine the socioeconomic and racial dimensions of housing and transportation. Finally, it will review perspectives on transit-oriented development and its implications for communities.

Several sources emphasize the link between greenhouse gas emissions and housing and call for reforms in transportation and housing to address the urban crisis in the Bay Area. California Air Resources Board's 2018 Progress Report states that 41% of greenhouse gases are from transportation, and from this sector, those a majority being single mode commuters. According to the same report, around 65% of commuters drive alone to work in the Bay Area. This report concludes that Californians are spending more time on their commutes and in traffic, with overall commute times increasing⁽¹⁾. This is relevant to Menlo Park because many of the workers in the Downtown area do not live in Menlo Park and have to commute from different cities.

Among different these sources, there is agreement that issues related to transportation and housing are compounded by factors such as socioeconomic class and race. A large majority of workers in downtown Menlo Park are low-income and/ or people of color; therefore it is important to consider the role race and economic class play in issues related to housing and transportation. The 2018 Progress Report for California's Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act also writes that as housing becomes less affordable, low-income residents of California are relocating at greater rates than the rest of the population while bearing a greater housing

1. California Air Resources Board, 2018 Progress Report for California's Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act, 2018, https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2018-11/Final2018Report_SB150_112618_02_Report.pdf

LITERATURE REVIEW

cost burden (2). Moving Silicon Valley Forward supports this notion by asserting that Black and Latino families bear a greater burden of housing cost while having to commute further to their jobs each day in the Bay Area (3). Moving Silicon Valley Forward, a report published by the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California (NPH) and Urban Habitat, highlights how the issue of housing in the Bay Area is also an environmental issue because the housing crisis has forced low-income workers to commute further in order to stay in the Bay Area (4). Alex Schafran writes about the outward migration towards the Central Valley of people of color that explains why certain demographics must commute further in the Bay Area. Schfran asserts that the burdens faced by low-income workers today are the result of racist planning practices from the past that still affects where people can or cannot live today. Black and Latinx workers have been limited in where they can live since the last century (5). This is relevant to Menlo Park because this describes the lives of many workers in the Downtown area.

In support of the perspective that Moving Silicon Valley Forward and the 2018 Progress Report for California's Sustainable Communities advances, the Legislative Analyst's Office published in their housing report for California that the isolating effects that housing costs on commute times led to "a 10 percent increase in a metro's median rent is associated with a 4.5 [percentage point] increase in individual commute times (6). Put simply, as housing becomes more expensive and communities like Menlo Park become more difficult to live in, low-income workers will have to commute further and bear a greater burden of the housing-transportation crisis. These sources, altogether, suggest that in order to achieve equity in housing and sustainability in transportation, cities like Menlo Park must think about ways to allow for diversity in socioeconomic class and race.

There are different perspectives on how to develop solutions for the housing crisis in the Bay Area. Of the perspectives that explore the relationship with housing and greenhouse gas emissions, several sources suggest dual reform of housing and

2. *ibid*

3. Moving Silicon Valley Forward, 2012 <http://nonprofithousing.org/wpcontent/uploads/Documents/Reports/MovingSiliconValleyForward1.pdf>

4. *ibid*

5. Alex Schafran, *The Road the Resegregation: Northern California and the Failure of Politics*, 2018

6. Legislative Analyst's Office, *California's High Housing Costs: Causes and Consequences*, 2015, <https://lao.ca.gov/reports/2015/finance/housing-costs/housing-costs.pdf>

LITERATURE REVIEW

transportation. The El Camino and Downtown Specific Plan for Menlo Park calls for 300,000 square feet of additional retail and 680 new residential units, which is projected to yield a total of 1,357 jobs and 1,537 residents (7). However, it is important to note that in the context of the literature reviewed, this plan will not significantly improve the jobs to housing ratio for the housing and transportation crisis in the area. According to census data, there are many low-income jobs in the Bay Area but not enough housing, creating a 3 to 1 jobs to housing ratio (8). According to the RHNA Allocations for 2015-2023, Menlo Park is recommended to build a total of 655 new units of housing, 233 of which are allocated for very low-income and 129 for low-income (9). While the plan will surpass the RHNA allocations, the proposed plan does not take into account the large number of additional jobs allowed by Menlo Park's General Plan. In efforts to bring together the issue of transportation and housing, many communities have called for transit-oriented development. Most urban economic models predict that while building new rail stations and improving transportation would increase access to surrounding neighborhoods, it also leads to "higher land values" and attracts "higher density development" (10).

In other words, by improving the public transit in Menlo Park, there is a possibility that this could increase the land values, exacerbating issues urban issues of inequity. More needs to be done than just improving transport at the site of jobs; building more housing, specifically affordable housing, will better help address issues related to the mismatch of where jobs are and where they live. San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR) suggests that an equitable community is one that can support people of all income levels (11). In order to support goals of equity, communities must think about who the transportation is for and ensuring that the benefits are equally shared. Housing and transportation are linked issue and in order to address one, it is important to think about the other.

7. Menlo Park El Camino Real and Downtown Specific Plan, <https://www.menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/290/Specific-Plan---Complete>

8. U.S. Census Bureau. Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, "On the Map: Origin-Destination Database."

9. San Francisco Bay Area Progress in Meeting 2007-2014 Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA)

10. Legislative Analyst's Office, California's High Housing Costs: Causes and Consequences, 2015, <https://lao.ca.gov/reports/2015/finance/housing-costs/housing-costs.pdf>

11. SPUR, SPUR's Agenda for Change in the San Francisco Bay Area, 2016 https://www.spur.org/sites/default/files/publications_pdfs/SPUR%27s_Agenda_for_Change_2016.pdf#page=8

LITERATURE REVIEW

While analyzing our project, it is important to learn from these lessons from the greater Bay Area community and how we should adapt our urban solutions to address the needs of all community members.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY



**81
surveys**



**Surveys and
interviews**



**October-
November 2018**

With a goal of canvassing to highlight community voices, we created a one-page survey to evaluate current transportation modes, housing affordability, and desires of our target audience. We took inspiration from a Palo Alto Transportation Management Association mode share survey conducted in 2017 as well as a survey conducted by TransForm regarding transportation along Highway 101. After reviewing the draft with our community partners, we informally tested the survey with peers and workers on campus to clarify the wording of questions before launching it in Menlo Park.

We conducted 81 in-person surveys throughout the Menlo Park downtown area with business owners, managers, and workers. We canvassed local businesses around the downtown Menlo Park area, including small businesses and chains along El Camino Real and Santa Cruz Avenue as well as larger stores like Safeway and Trader Joe's. Within our three-week timeframe, we aimed to diversify the days and times we went: Thursday afternoons, Friday or Saturday mornings, Tuesday afternoons, etc. We also dropped off and picked up surveys from a few restaurants and stores, but the response rate was lower than in-person interviews. Not all businesses were capable or willing to take our surveys at certain times, but by the end of our study, we came to the conclusion that we covered every shift and represented all the businesses that were willing to participate.

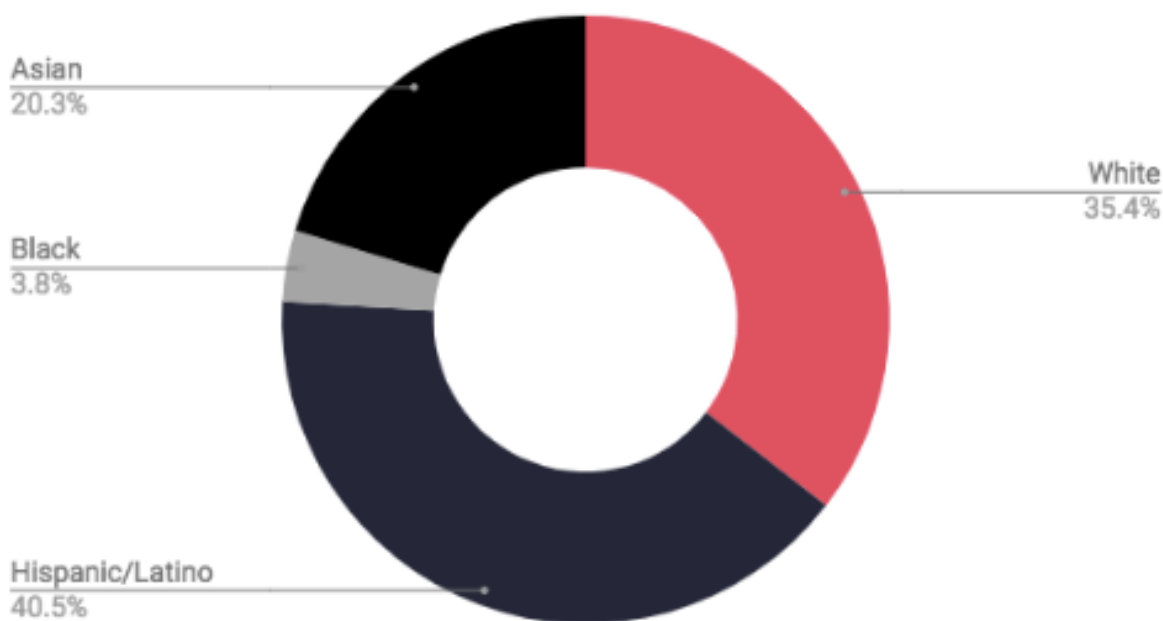
SURVEY METHODOLOGY

We administered the surveys on paper and through a Google Form on iPads. In some cases, we read out the survey questions to people who were working so they could answer and complete tasks at the same time. We also provided surveys translated into Spanish and canvassed in groups based on language abilities to prevent language (predominantly Spanish) from being a barrier. As we surveyed, we were able to listen to some respondents' extra commentary and personal testimonies of living in the Bay Area and working in Menlo Park, which we recorded to bring our data to life.

DEMOGRAPHICS

From our survey sample, we collected responses from Hispanic and Latino (40.5%), White (35.4%), Asian/Pacific Islander (20.3%) and Black or African-American (3.8%) respondents. n=77

What is your ethnicity?



DEMOGRAPHICS

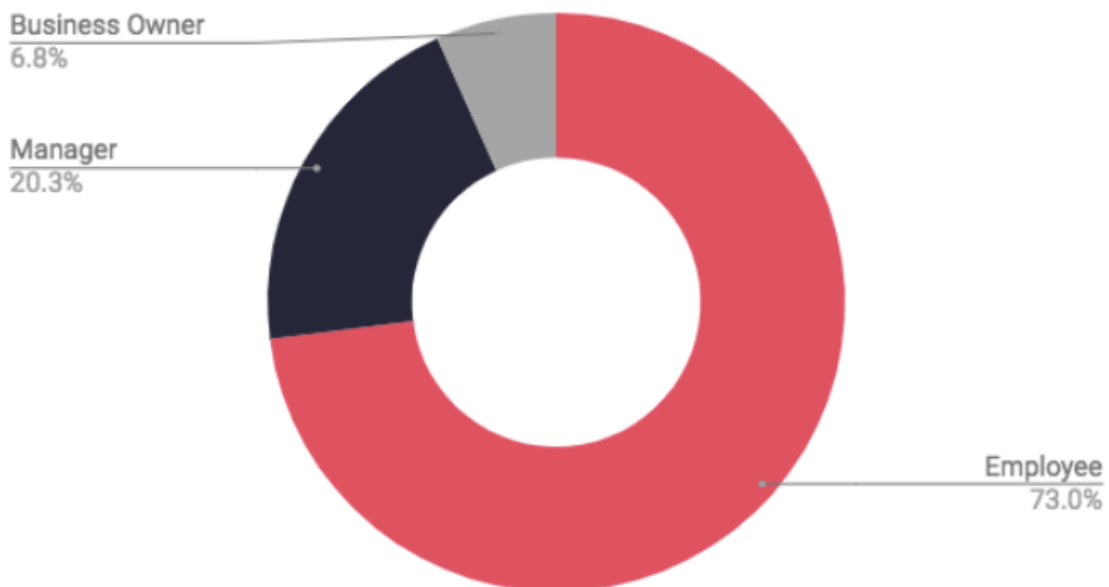
Our gender ratio was fairly evenly split, with 57.1% Female and 42.9% Male. An option to fill in other genders was included, but none selected this option. n=77

What is your gender?



We captured responses from a range of employees (73%), managers (23%), and business owners (6.8%) to understand how transportation and housing issues differ for people at different levels. Although most responses were from employees and service workers, responses from workers at higher levels were highly valuable as well. n=77

What is your employment status?



SURVEY RESULTS

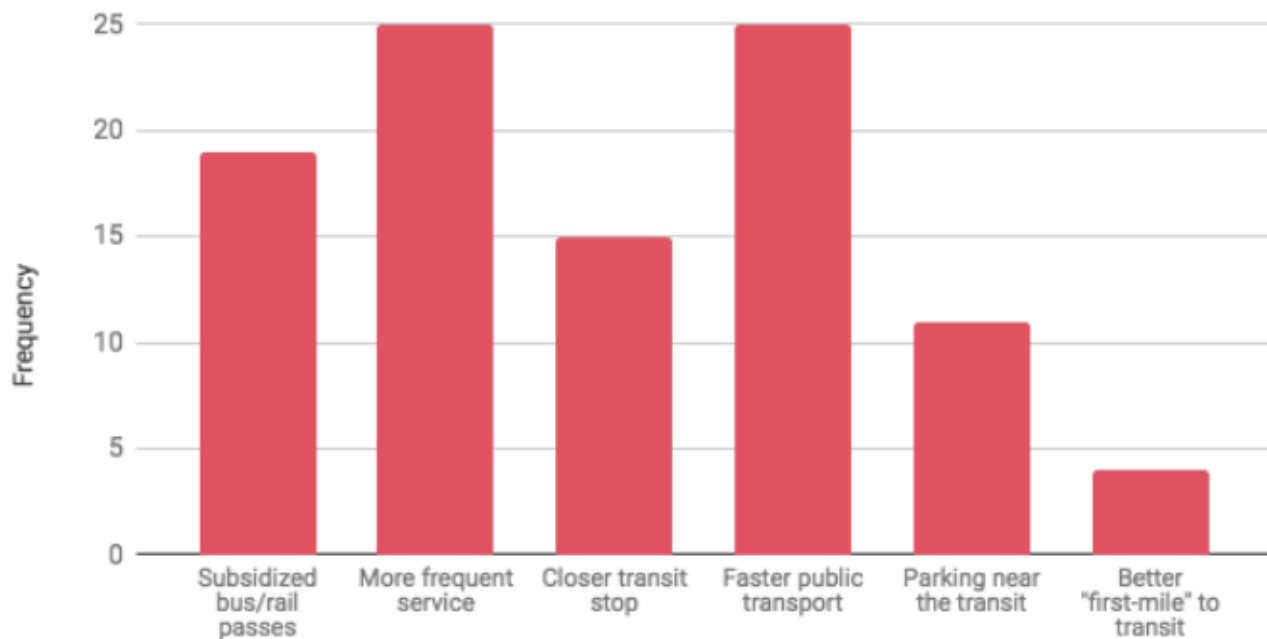


OVERALL TRENDS

22% of respondents lived inside of Menlo Park, and 78% lived outside. This figure is noteworthy because these people are Menlo Park residents who are potential voters. The overwhelming majority (80%) of people drove alone in a car to work. This is even higher than the rate at which single occupancy vehicles are used in Palo Alto, which is about 70% according to a Transportation Management Association (TMA) survey (12).

To amend this problem, policymakers can consider what incentives would promote the use of sustainable transportation. Survey respondents stated that incentives such as subsidized passes (18%), more frequent (25%), and reliable/faster (25%) public transportation options would increase their likelihood of using public transportation. n=66

Which incentives would increase your likelihood of using public transportation?



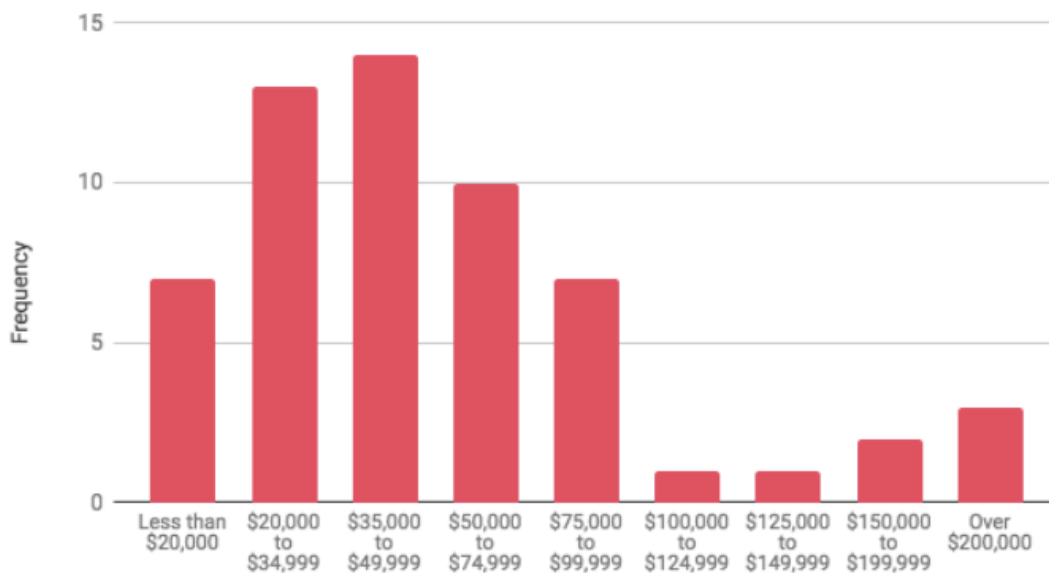
12. Gennady Sheyner, "Palo Alto commits funds to fight solo-driving", 2017.

<https://www.paloaltoonline.com/news/2017/09/20/palo-alto-commits-funds-to-fight-solo-driving>

OVERALL TRENDS

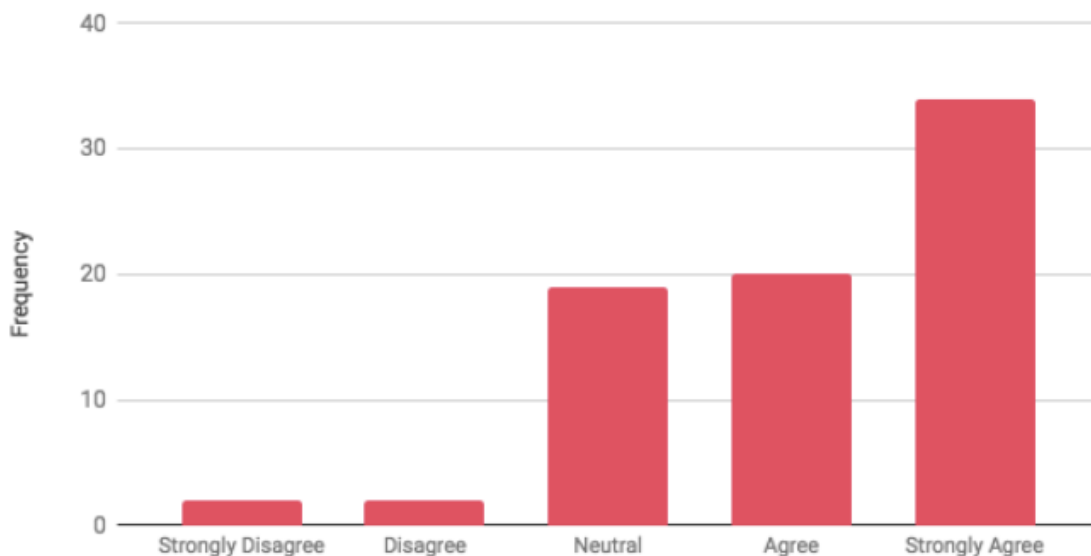
Annual household incomes varied from less than \$20,000 to over \$200,000. The median income range was \$35,000-\$49,999 with 59% of respondents earning less than \$50,000 annually. For a family size of 4 living in San Mateo County (SMC), this puts 59% of respondents in the 'very low' income level earning less than 50% of the annual median income (AMI) of SMC, \$118,400. This number is even greater for the low-income level with 75% of respondents earning less than \$75,000 a year, which is 60% of the AMI. n=58

Annual Household Income



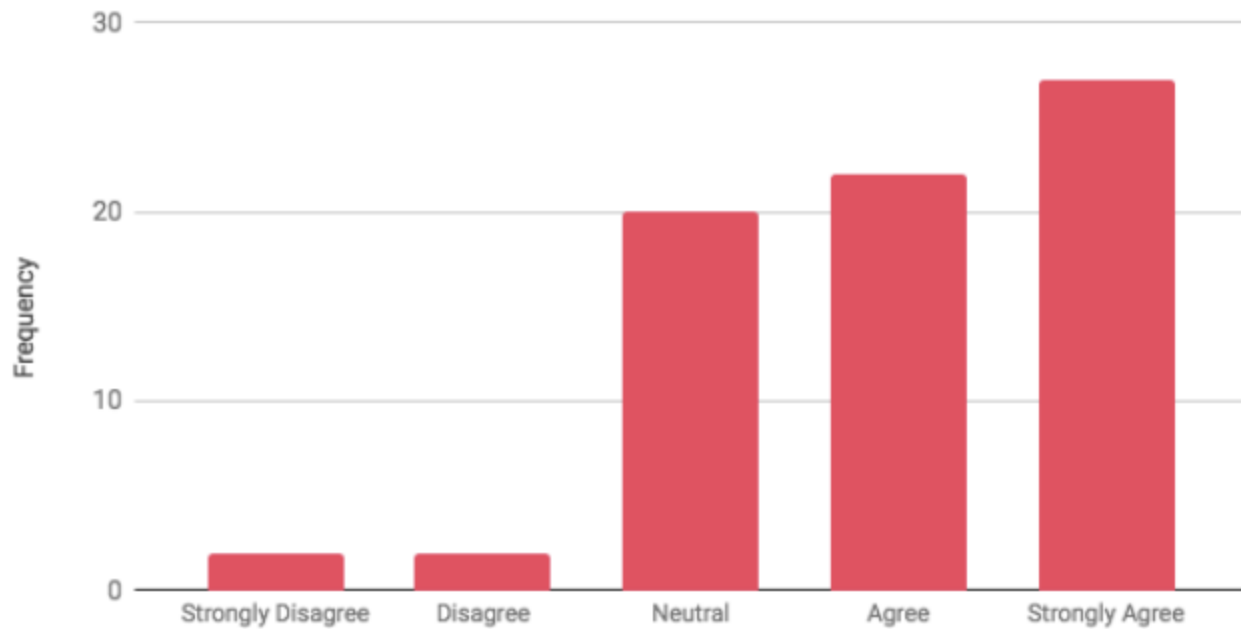
The median respondent **agreed** to the following statements:

How much do you agree with the following statement?: I would like to live closer to work



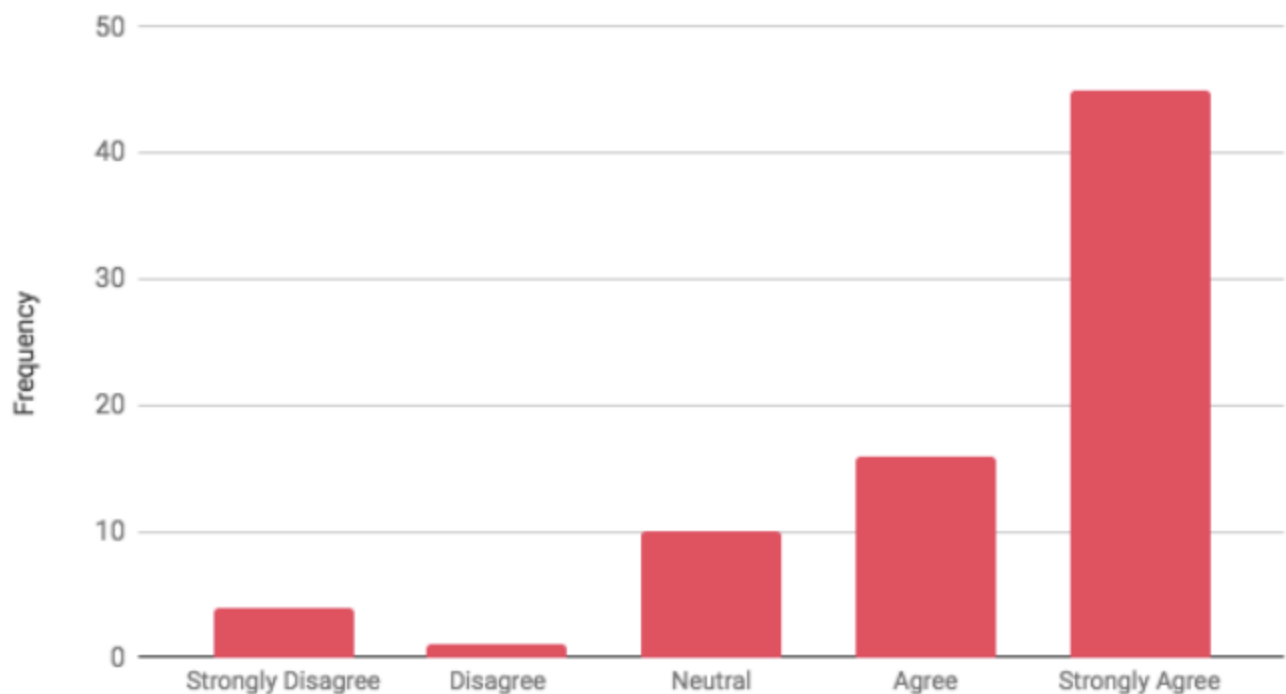
OVERALL TRENDS

Improving public transit options that connect to Menlo Park is a priority to me



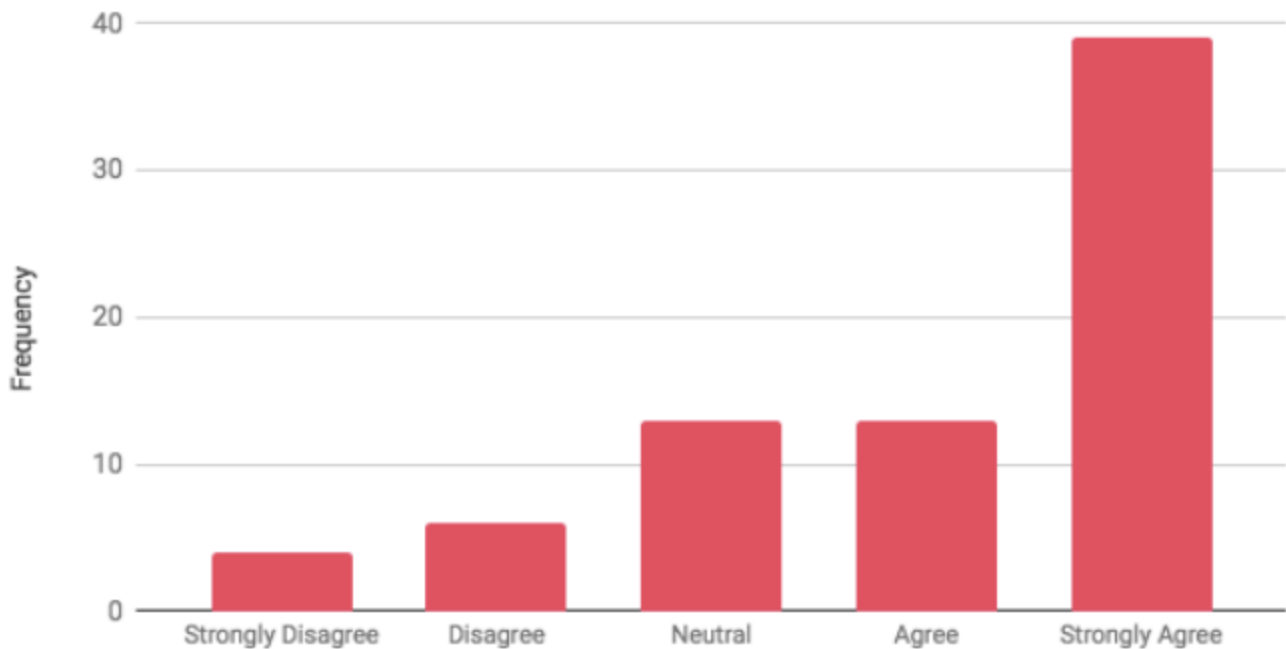
The median respondent **strongly agreed** to the following statements:

I want Menlo Park to build more affordable housing near transit

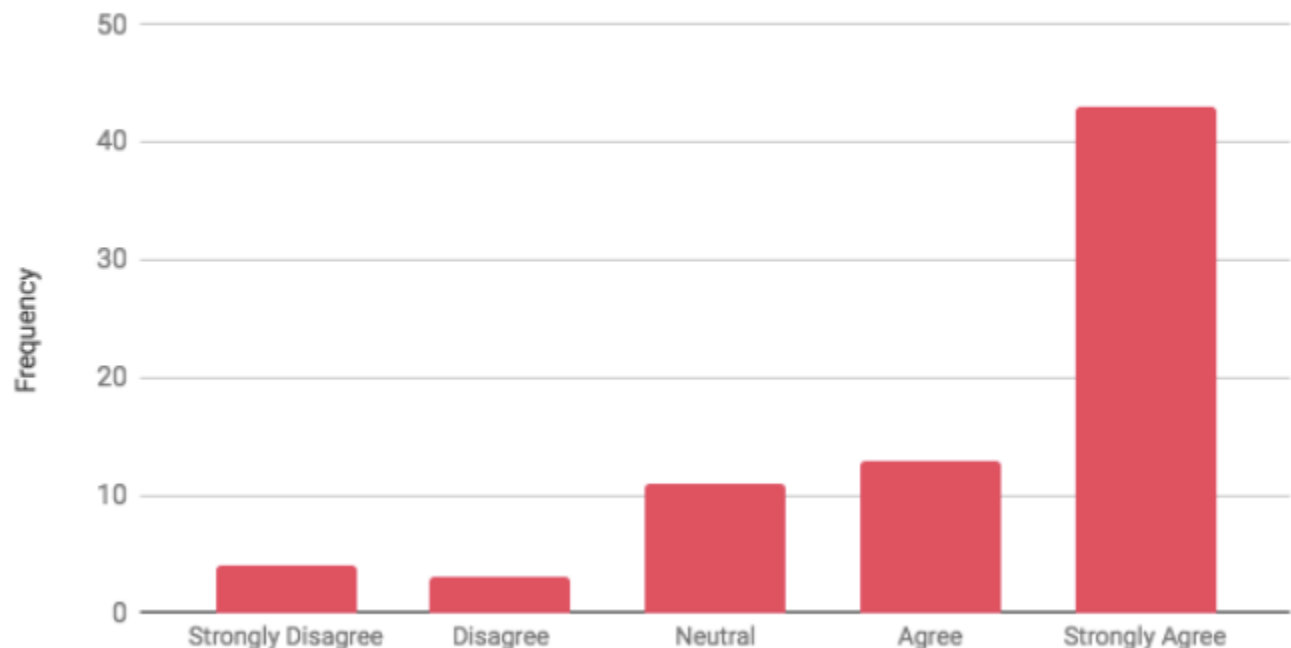


OVERALL TRENDS

If I lived closer to work, my housing expenses would exceed my budget



If I lived closer to work, I would walk, bike, or take public transportation more often.



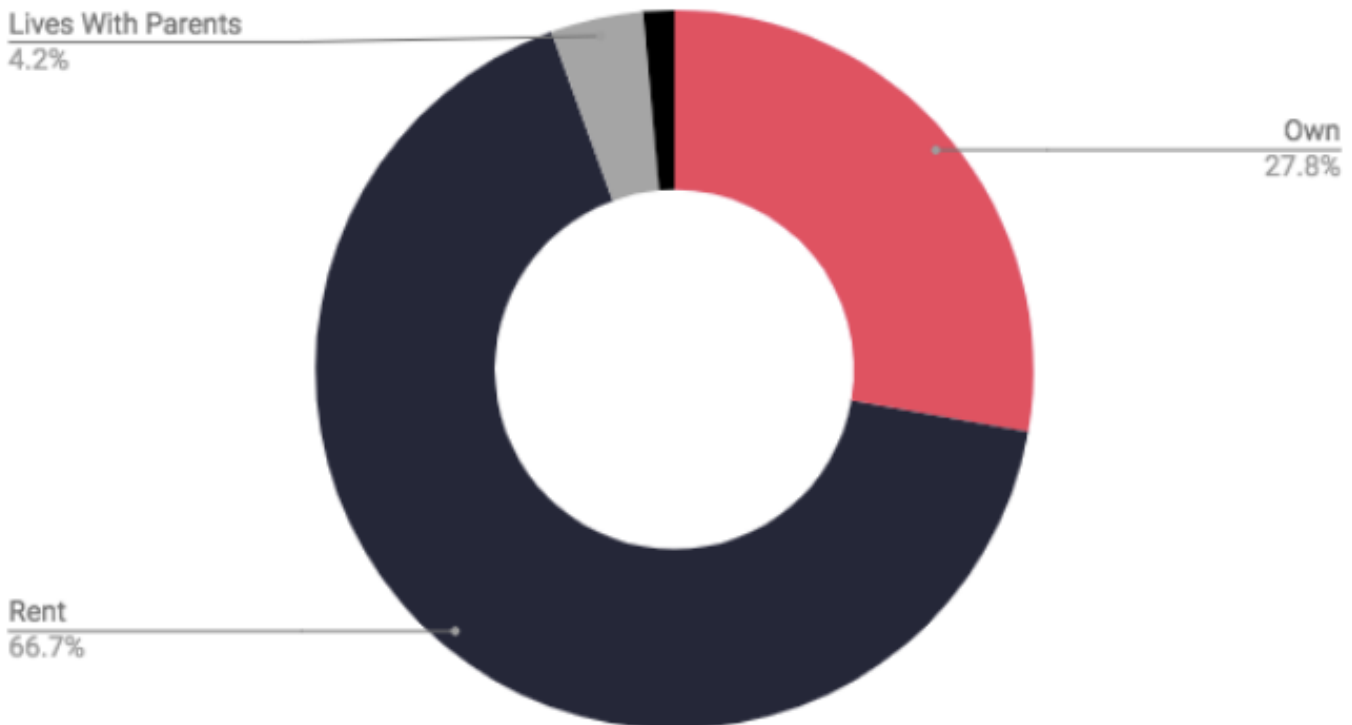
OVERALL TRENDS

The only statement the median respondent reported feeling neutral to was “The transportation methods available to me are sufficient for getting to work.” However, this may have been an ambiguous question, as some did not know whether transportation methods referred to public transportation or any transportation. If we were to reproduce our study, we would eliminate this ambiguity by specifically stating “public transportation methods.”

HOUSING

In our data, 67% of respondents rented their house while 28% own (n=72). According to datausa.io, the 2010 census reports that 57.9% of residents in Menlo Park own their houses, which is a significant discrepancy from our data (13). In part, this difference is because we were predominantly surveying service workers.

Housing Status



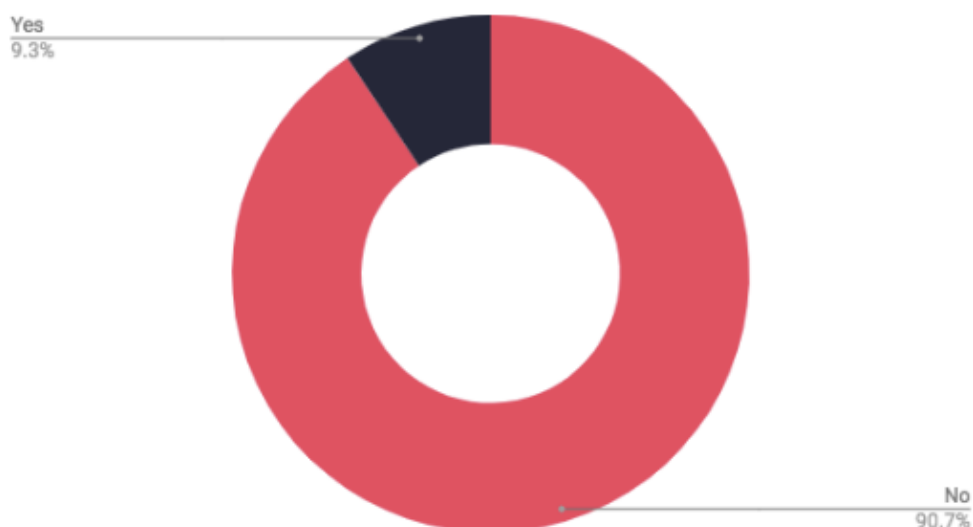
HOUSING

When the respondents were asked if they could afford to pay the median rent of \$3,700/month in Menlo Park, 75% answered no. When asked if they could afford to buy a home in Menlo Park at the median price of 2.4 million, 91% of people answered no. While respondents may not have the ability to pay for the median cost of housing, 70% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would like to live closer to their work in Menlo Park. If they did live closer to work, though, 87% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their housing expenses would exceed their budget. In retrospect, we realize that asking if a respondent can afford the median rent is a bit ambitious, as median housing is still a very high bar. To improve this study, we could ask if a respondent could afford the bottom quintile of rent in Menlo Park.

Can you afford to pay the median rent? (\$3700/month)



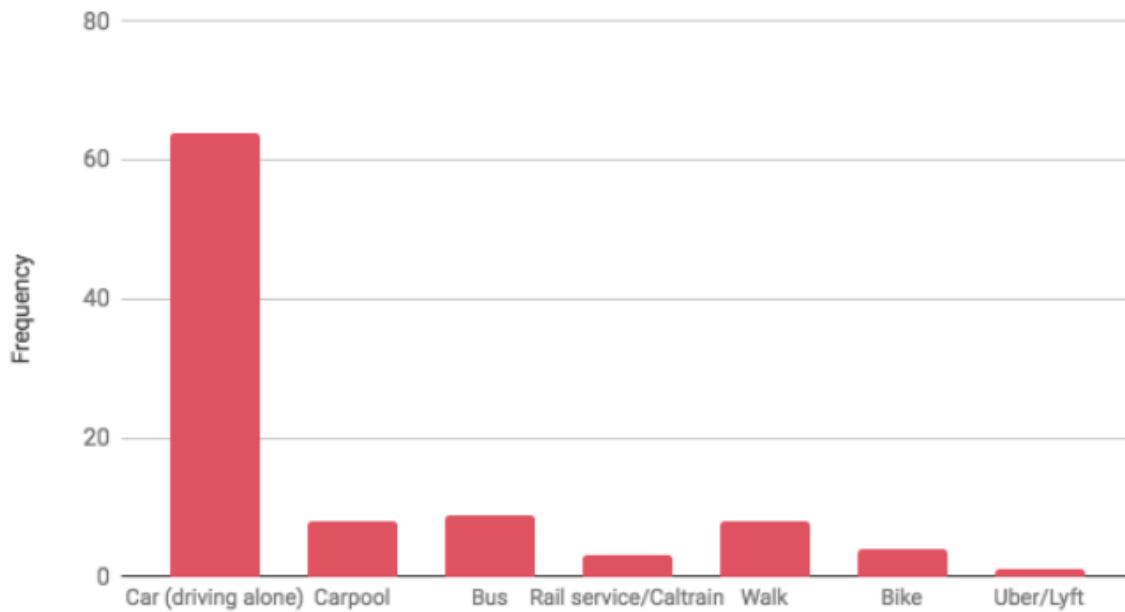
Can you afford to purchase a house for the median price? (\$2.4mm)



TRANSPORTATION

Commute times ranged from 10 to 60 minutes, averaging 32 minutes. Our data reflects that problems in the housing and transportation sectors are interrelated. While the workers of Menlo Park would like to live closer to their jobs, the high housing cost prevents them from doing so. This pushes them to rent in further areas and encourages them to drive alone to work

Mode of Transportation for Commute



67% agreed or strongly agree that improving transportation that connects Menlo Park is a priority, while only 5.4% indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed. Many of these problems associated with transportation could be mitigated by having more people live where they work: 76% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would walk, bike, or use public transportation more if they lived close, while only 9.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed. In fact, people approve of this strategy: 80% of respondents agree or strongly agree that they would like affordable housing near public transportation. Of the remaining respondents, only 6.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this sentiment.

The main transit operators in Menlo Park are Caltrain, which provides rail service from San Francisco to San Jose with weekday commute-hour service to Gilroy, and SamTrans bus service which provides service throughout San Mateo County and into parts of San Francisco and Palo Alto. However, people express that these methods are just not practical for commuting. Thus, the majority of the workers in Menlo Park drive alone to work.

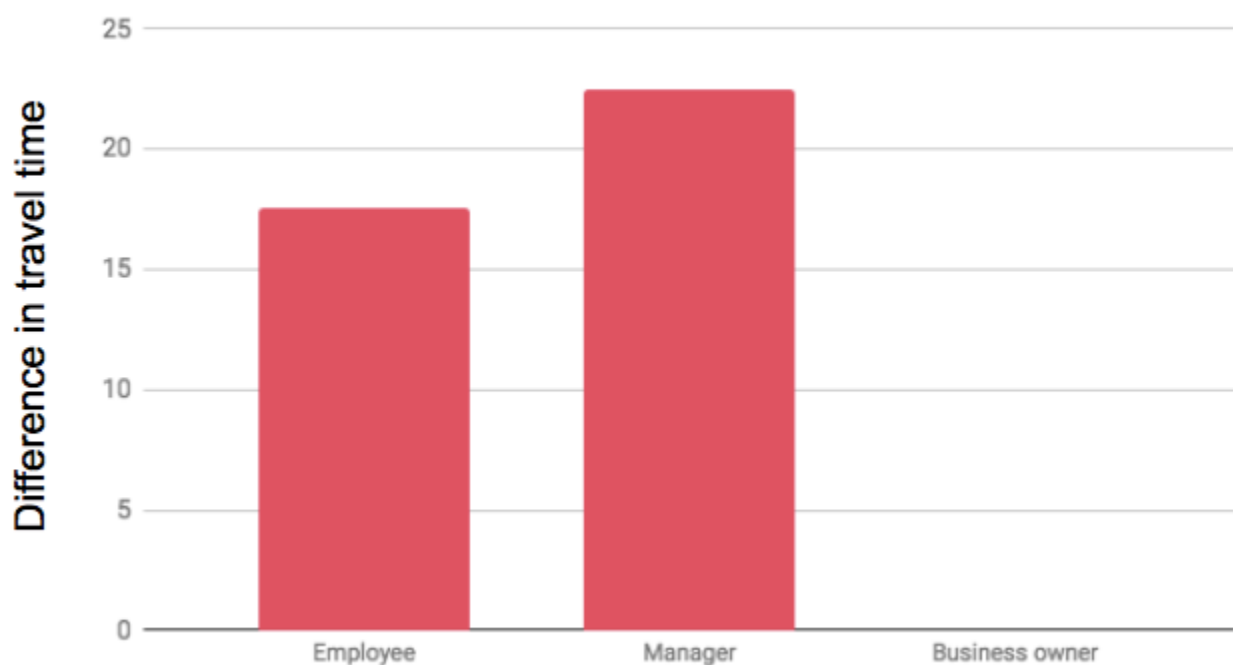
STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

In regards to modes of transportation, we were not able to draw any statistically significant conclusions on what demographics are using sustainable modes of transportation (i.e. not driving alone) because only 16 respondents did not drive alone to work. This objective could be measured through a larger sample size.

To dive deeper into our survey data, we ran regressions to observe the larger trends in our data by demographic while controlling for external factors. These controls made our data more exogenous (meaning that they suggest a causal role between variables), but given the fact that we could only ask a limited number of questions, we could not eliminate all external sources that could be influencing the results, like an individual's specific reasons for not taking public transportation that cannot be quantified.

We did not see a significant relationship between travel time and income, but there was a statistically significant relationship between employment position and travel time: being an employee is associated with traveling 17.6 minutes more than business owners, and managers are associated with traveling 22.5 minutes more than business owners, controlling for race and gender. This makes sense because the business owners are generally well off financially and can afford to pay the high costs of housing nearby.

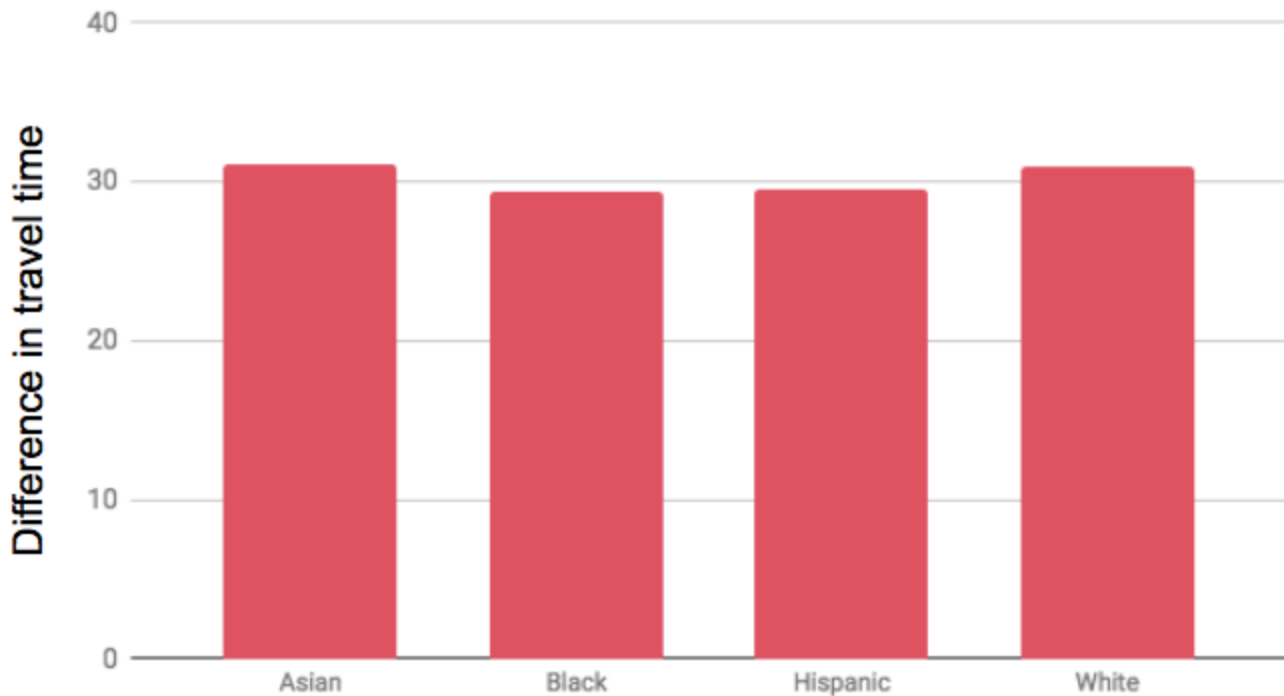
Travel Time Regression



STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

This dichotomy is also economically significant because it is a noteworthy amount of time; in contrast, there was only a two-minute difference between races.

Travel Time Regression

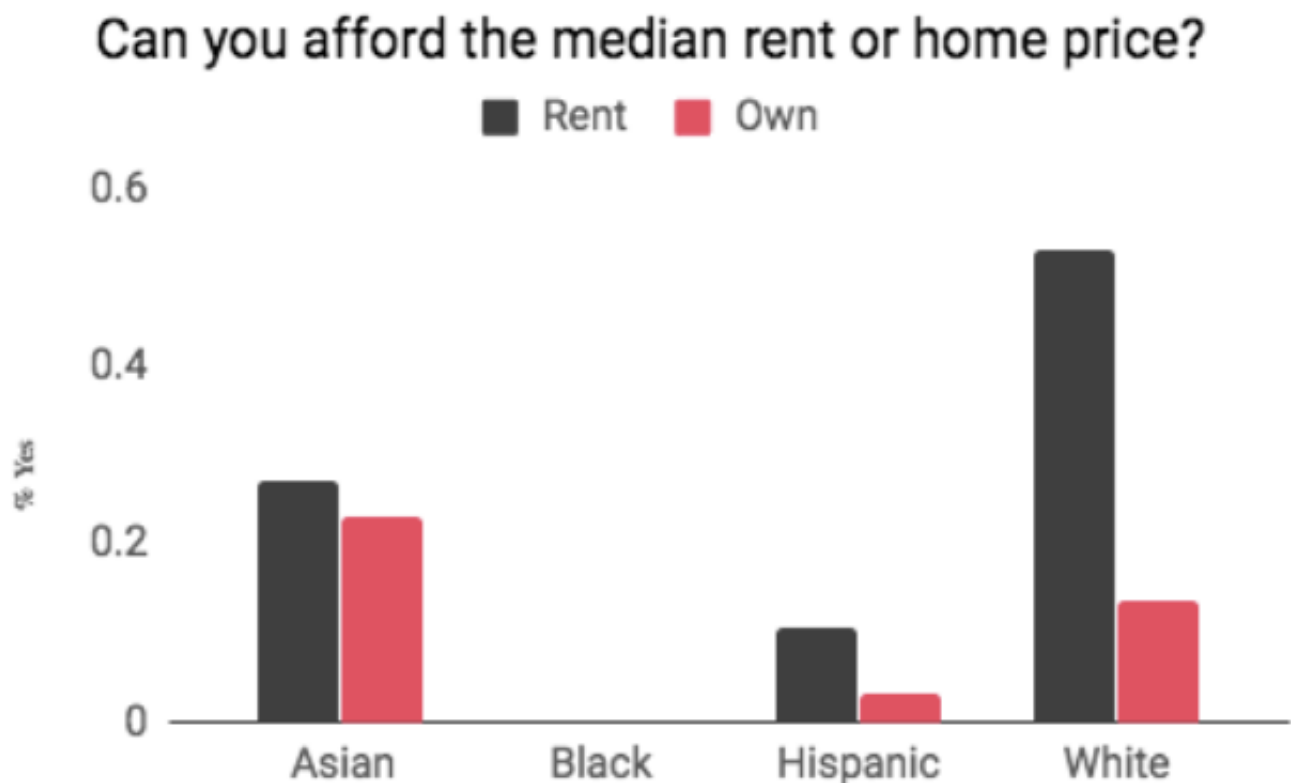


As a general rule of thumb, higher income was associated with lower approval of incentives for public transportation, though they were generally not statistically significant. However, for the question of more abundant and cheaper parking near public transportation each thousand dollar increase in income is associated with a .25% point reduction in the probability that the respondent would say yes, controlling for race and gender, and this finding was statistically significant. Each thousand dollar increase in income is associated with a .45% point reduction in the probability that the respondent would say "I would like to live closer to work," controlling for race and gender (albeit to a lesser degree of statistical significance).

In terms of race and gender, there was no consistent leaning in the approval of these incentives.

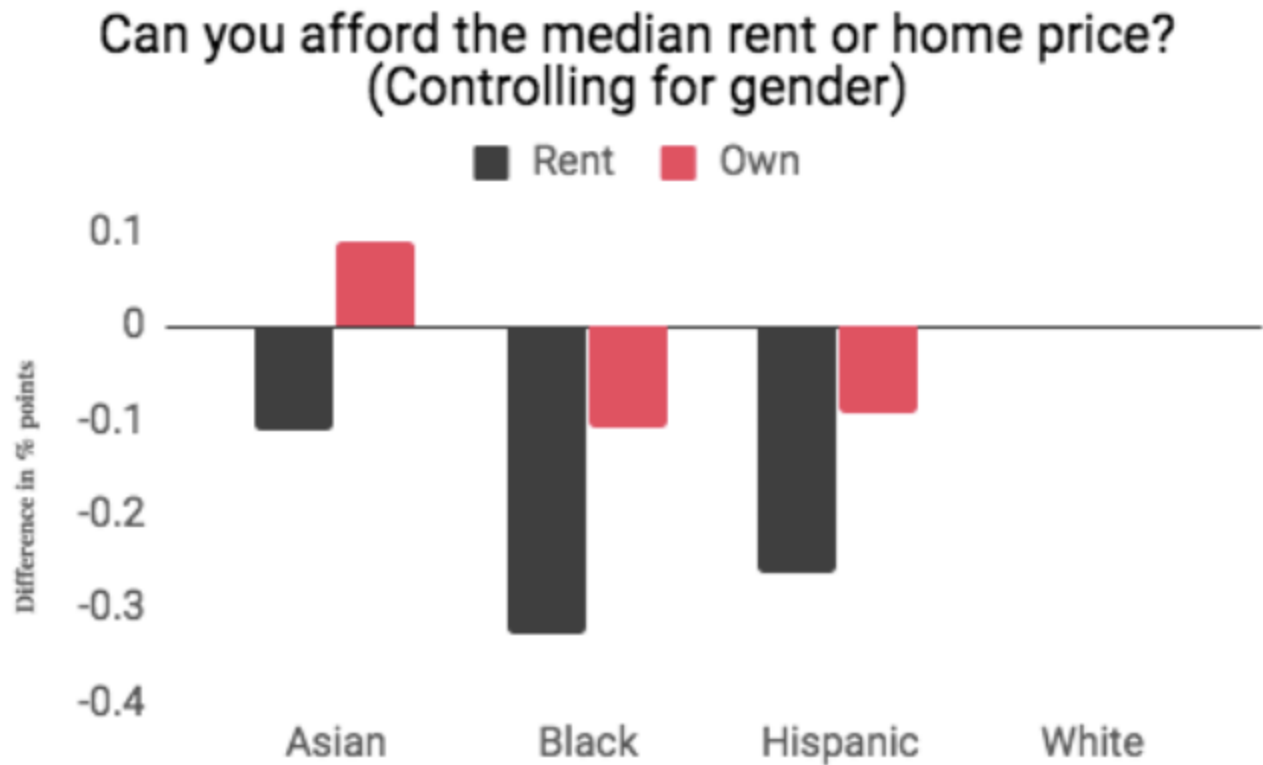
STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Perhaps the most salient result came from the question of whether the respondent can afford the median cost for renting/buying a home in Menlo Park. We observed that Black and Hispanic respondents were less likely to be able to rent or own a house. By running regression tests, we can confirm that this disparity is due to race as opposed to other external factors, such as the gender wage gap. In our regression, being black is associated with 32% point less probability of being able to rent a home for the median price, and 10.9% point less probability in owning a home, relative to a white respondent, while holding gender constant. We only had three black respondents, but none of them could afford the median rent or home price. Being Hispanic (41% of our respondents) is associated with a 26% point decrease in the probability of being able to afford the median rent, and a 9% point decrease in the probability of owning a home. All of the results for race were statistically significant to the .05 level of significance. This information suggests that minorities are especially affected by housing policies in Menlo Park.



STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

While we did notice that male respondents were more able to afford housing, after controlling for race, this difference between genders was negligible (in fact, female respondents had a slightly higher proportion of yes respondents).



STORIES AND TESTIMONIALS



STORIES AND TESTIMONIALS

In addition to the quantitative data, we gathered testimonials from workers, managers, and business owners in Menlo Park to provide human stories that support the data. These stories paint a more complete picture of people's housing and transportation needs by reflecting the respondents' emotions and reactions to these issues.

Some Menlo Park workers talked about their desire to live closer to work, but being unable to due to high housing prices:

"I went to San Jose State so I live there. I would definitely consider moving closer if it was cheaper. This is one of the most expensive zip codes to live in from what I've seen. I've looked at the prices and I can't afford it. I have a job here and I can't even afford it." - Manager at Relax the Back

"I want affordable housing for everybody. They are helping the people who can't afford housing at all, but people like me who can afford to pay 80%, the government won't come in and help. The middle is stuck." - Anonymous Worker

"It is difficult for my employees, they must live elsewhere." - Manager at Trader Joe's

"We need real affordable housing for non-tech workers." - Anonymous Worker

"It would be nice if people could actually move into affordable housing. But it doesn't seem realistic." - Anonymous Worker

“The first thing you do when you wake up in the morning is think about your kids. That’s why so many people move out of here to find cheaper housing. Even if you have to drive further there’s more money for food. My husband and I bought a mobile home, we split it and live with our sons. We sold one of our cars so we could afford to live closer. But we think it’s worth it.”

Anonymous Worker

STORIES AND TESTIMONIALS

Others talked about the rapid pace of change they've seen in Menlo Park housing prices, and how it's been difficult for some to keep up:

- "I think living closer to work is everybody's dream. I'm lucky, I built a house 30 years ago that is now worth \$5.2 million. I rent out another one bedroom apartment for \$4200 per month, and there's a waitlist. I think Menlo Park should build more everything. We are 50 years behind. They talked about building more housing 50 years ago, now they're still talking about it" - Owner of Lorist Franz W
- "I'm lucky, grew up in Menlo Park. My parents bought a house decades ago for \$9000. I inherited it, I won the lottery. This used to be a place for everybody, but things change so fast. These were bedroom communities, and everybody would be commuting up to San Francisco. But in the 70s things changed. I used to put chips in devices as a job. I could've bought a house back then but I wasn't in a hurry. The next thing you knew, prices doubled. It's like the second gold rush. It's a hardship for people that grew up here. I was in the city for 15 years. I then opened this bookstore [in Menlo Park], and moved back because of the commute. That went really well. Selling books was easier before the internet. Now there are so many books on internet [sic], and there's all this price cutting. Everyone's undershooting everyone. I miss the good old days. It's so hard to grow up in pre-internet [sic] world and live in post-internet [sic] world." - Owner of Feldman's Books

Many workers talked about a distrust in public transit, and a lack of reliable, fast, connected transit:

"Something that connects Menlo Park to San Jose would help. Right now, I'd have to take a bus and a train. There are too many things that would make it too long of a commute. I would want something that could transfer you -- just one thing for the whole commute. The transfers mean a longer commute, it takes as long as driving."

- Manager at Relax the Back

"To get to public transit, I have to drive anyway." - Anonymous Worker

STORIES AND TESTIMONIALS

- “Improving public transit options? Of course. I was raised in Amsterdam. It has the best transit system in the world. But here, when I catch a bus, it’s exact change only. I can’t use my bus ticket to take the train. In Holland, we buy a book that is good for everything. It’s simple. Don’t deal with change. That’s what makes traveling on a bus here so difficult. It’s nonsense. You need to be able to buy an all-day ticket.” - Owner at Lorist Franz W

“*Public transit isn’t reliable to me -- I don’t trust it. I’m a stickler for being on time. I like having a car to use because I don’t like other people in control of my commute. Buses and trains break down all the time but you can get in your car anytime.*

”

Manager at Mattress Firm

Others talked about the long lengths of their commutes and heavy traffic:

“I drive 1.1 miles to work every day and it takes up to 20 minutes. It’s because I go past three schools: Hillview, Menlo Atherton, and one other. I really have to time it. If I leave at 9am, when kids go to school, it can take 20 minutes. If I leave at 7:30, it takes 2-3 minutes.” - Owner of Lorist Franz W

STORIES AND TESTIMONIALS

“*It takes me an hour to get to work. Getting home takes an hour and sometimes thirty minutes, it can be more. It's just sitting bumper to bumper, every car is just waiting.*

”

Manager at Relax the Back

These stories highlight a variety of responses to the general trends of unaffordability, unreliability, and rapid change, illuminating our understanding of the extent of Menlo Park's crises further than even the survey responses.



CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS



KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Most people working in Menlo Park cannot afford to live in Menlo Park.

In whatever time respondents could allot, they found great importance in discussing these issues. Even business owners, who were more likely to live in Menlo Park, indicated the hardships faced by their workers.

Recommendation: Menlo Park can prioritize this issue when revising the Downtown Plan; addressing affordability is a key facet of sustainability. While our survey reached 81 respondents, using community resources to survey the downtown businesses and their employees on a larger scale through canvassing or focus groups would further reflect people's comments on ways to improve the Downtown Specific Plan and help solidify tangible plans for the moving forward.

2. Employees face the brunt of housing costs and transportation, typically having to commute the farthest.

As previously noted, employees and managers generally commute farther to work in comparison to business owners. The greater availability of stable and affordable housing nearby could prevent workers from living far from their workplace and relying heavily on unsustainable transit. As mentioned in the Literature Review, the number of affordable housing units in the Downtown Specific Plan does not account for the increase in jobs based on the 2016 General Plan updates.

Recommendation: Menlo Park should increase availability of housing units based on the new job creations in the Downtown Plan. Additionally, Menlo Park should consider people's ability to pay for housing, and perhaps increasing the availability of rental options, which may be more realistic than home-ownership. While over 45% of our respondents fell between the \$20,000 and \$50,000 income range, close to 90% of them made less than \$100,000. Many workers would benefit from having housing at rents from \$500-\$3000 a month. About 30% of the respondents agreed that a rent between \$1000 and \$1500 would allow them to live where they work. Making sure housing remains designated for service

KEY TAKEAWAYS

workers (as opposed to other professionals) is also key. Public transportation options integrated into downtown areas or near bus stops can help people take more sustainable transportation forms and limit car use.

3. Despite the availability of some public transportation options, most people are driving alone to work.

Many respondents were unhappy with traffic, yet did not view public transportation as a solution. They reported issues such as having multiple bus transfers or using multiple modes of transportation, high Caltrain prices for traveling one stop over two zones, and unreliable bus times made many respondents unwilling to change their commute. Compared to these issues, driving alone is much easier. However, many respondents indicated that they would participate if transportation improved, which allows for optimism when innovating.

Recommendation: Menlo Park transportation will benefit from more frequent and more connected bus service, especially close to downtown business complexes. Among other possible incentives to use public transportation, 29% of respondents stated that subsidized bus/rail passes would increase their use of public transportation, and 38% reported that they would use public transportation if it were more frequent and faster. The Palo Alto Transportation Management Association has a successful initiative in which downtown workers making under \$70,000 can receive free Clipper Cards with their choice of appropriate transit option; Menlo Park can model this program to improve public transportation usage. As a stakeholder in Bay Area transportation, Menlo Park could broadly advocate for the improvement and simplification of transportation options at the countywide and regional level.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Many survey respondents felt strongly about improving housing and transportation, and this was reflected in the survey data as well as conversation. Those who lived in the area considered themselves lucky, and many could not even imagine a community where short commute times and affordable housing existed, let alone in Menlo Park. While skyrocketing housing and transportation complexity reflect the larger trends of Bay Area housing and transportation, Menlo Park can be a model in decreasing commute times and providing abundant housing. The connections between workplace, home, and transportation contribute heavily quality of life. We hope our data will reflect the demand for improved housing and transportation and guide change in city planning initiatives, specifically the Downtown Specific Plan, that is ideal for those who live or work there.

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